

Dawn Summary 17 August 2025

Summary of Relentless bigotry

The article highlights the growing menace of religious extremism in Pakistan, emphasizing that the country cannot become just and progressive unless this trend is curbed. It particularly points to the Ahmadi community, which continues to suffer systematic persecution in Punjab and Sindh through violent attacks on their worship places, homes, and community members. The latest incident in Faisalabad, carried out under the cover of Independence Day celebrations and reportedly led by a TLP leader, saw two Ahmadi worship sites set ablaze and homes attacked. Though cases have been filed and arrests made, doubts remain about whether true justice will be served. What makes the attacks more tragic is that they occurred soon after Pakistan observed National Minorities Day, a reminder of Quaid-i-Azam's vision outlined in his August 11, 1947 speech, where he declared that protecting citizens' lives, property, and religious freedoms is the foremost duty of the state. Unfortunately, the government's failure to uphold these principles has emboldened extremists, allowing them to deprive non-Muslims of their rights and dignity. The article warns that if such violence continues unchecked, extremism will destroy the fabric of society, and calls on both federal and Punjab governments to take decisive action to protect minorities.

Summary of Auto committee

The commerce ministry has decided to form a special committee to deal with the ongoing challenges of Pakistan's struggling car industry. The committee, which will include officials from the commerce and industries ministries as well as the FBR, has been assigned the task of designing a strategy to protect local car manufacturers from a possible influx of imported used cars, encourage exports, and align the automobile sector with national industrial objectives. However, due to the centralised governance system and limited authority of ministries, many in the industry doubt whether this body will be effective in resolving their core issues. The commerce minister's plan to add cars to the export list along with motorcycles and tractors has been described as overly ambitious, especially given the government's inconsistent policies. For instance, Budget 2026 has reduced duties on imported luxury vehicles, making them cheaper, while simultaneously increasing the prices of locally assembled cars. In addition, the proposed withdrawal of tariff protections for local manufacturers may create further imbalance, since the high cost of doing business, driven by taxes and energy prices, already weakens the local industry. Unless taxes are lowered and business costs reduced, imported vehicles will dominate the market regardless of

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whether protections are phased out gradually or suddenly. Over the last four decades, Pakistan's auto sector has suffered from policy instability, high production costs, protectionist measures, and lack of competition, which has hindered industrial growth and limited consumer choice. Consequently, the creation of yet another committee seems unlikely to address the deep-rooted structural problems. Without stable long-term policies focused on reducing costs and enhancing competitiveness rather than protectionism, the automobile industry will continue to stagnate.

Summary of Unprepared nation

The article highlights the devastating impact of the recent monsoon rains that have battered Pakistan since late June, culminating in widespread catastrophe. In just two days, torrential downpours and cloudbursts triggered flash floods in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), killing over 300 people and wiping out entire villages. A provincial rescue helicopter also crashed during relief operations, claiming five more lives. Similar tragedies unfolded in Azad Kashmir, where mudslides buried families, and in Gilgit-Baltistan, where glacier-fed torrents destroyed infrastructure, farmland, and homes. Nationwide, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has recorded at least 645 deaths and 905 injuries, with KP suffering the most damage. With further rains predicted, the full scale of destruction remains uncertain.

The article stresses that these floods are not isolated incidents but part of a recurring pattern of climate-induced disasters. Pakistan is facing its second massive flooding crisis within three years, echoing the devastation of 2022 when unprecedented rains submerged one-third of the country, killed 1,700 people, and displaced 33 million. Once again, scientists' warnings about climate change intensifying monsoons, cloudbursts, and glacier melt have proven true. However, much of the tragedy stems from human failure—poor preparedness, weak enforcement of land-use planning, and an ineffective disaster response system. For example, while the Meteorological Department issued an advisory on August 12 predicting heavy rains in KP, AJK, and GB, it lacked the detail and urgency needed for effective preventive measures.

To cope with the immediate crisis, the article calls for rapid relief efforts, including restoring communication lines, constructing temporary bridges, establishing evacuation centres in schools and mosques, and distributing wireless radios in affected areas. More importantly, it emphasizes that long-term adaptation must become a survival priority. The state needs to modernize its forecasting systems, introduce a national observatory app with instant alerts, and use Pakistan's wide mobile penetration to deliver life-saving warnings. Local governments should enforce safe construction zones, build climate-resilient housing,

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strengthen embankments, and introduce disaster insurance and relocation schemes for vulnerable communities.

The piece concludes by underlining that the floods of 2010, 2022, and now 2025 represent an unbroken chain of escalating disasters. Unless Pakistan shifts from rhetoric to genuine adaptation and preparedness, the nation will continue to suffer repeated tragedies. Breaking this cycle of destruction requires urgent investment in resilience, as countless lives now depend on it.

Summary of “Counterterrorism Synergy” by Muhammad Amir Rana

The article “*Counterterrorism Synergy*” by Muhammad Amir Rana examines the evolving dynamics of Pakistan-US relations, particularly in the realm of counterterrorism (CT) cooperation. It argues that the recent revival of bilateral ties is influenced both by Islamabad’s efforts to reduce the trust deficit with Washington and by broader American geopolitical considerations. The trust gap between the two countries primarily stemmed from their divergent policies on Afghanistan, Pakistan’s alignment with China through CPEC, and disagreements following the Taliban’s return to power in 2021. Despite these tensions, Pakistan has recently enhanced its CT collaboration with the US, highlighted by a dialogue in Islamabad that reflected mutual willingness to expand cooperation.

One significant development was Washington’s decision to designate the Balochistan Liberation Army’s (BLA) military wing, the Majeed Brigade, as a terrorist organisation—a move seen as balancing its earlier listing of the Resistance Front, which India had celebrated as recognition of its concerns. This parallel suggests that US designations are guided by internal procedures rather than political concessions, and it also aligns with Pakistan’s earlier, long-standing request to outlaw the Majeed Brigade. Such steps have helped restore American confidence in Pakistan, particularly after Islamabad demonstrated results against IS-Khorasan, which both sides view as a global security threat.

Historically, Pakistan-US CT cooperation dates back to the post-9/11 era but has often been undermined by mutual mistrust and clashing interests. After Al Qaeda’s decline, Washington viewed groups like the TTP as primarily Pakistan’s problem, while showing greater concern over IS-K’s implications for US homeland security. By focusing on IS-K, Pakistan rebuilt credibility, leading to tangible American support, including border security improvements, training of police and first responders, and enhancement of investigative and prosecutorial capacities.

Recent joint statements show a clear shift in tone and depth of cooperation. The May 2024 statement cautiously recognised collaboration against IS-K, TTP, and other groups, whereas

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the August 2025 statement acknowledged Pakistan's sacrifices, included the BLA as a threat, and promised advanced technological support. This recognition highlights future cooperation on countering emerging challenges such as the militant use of drones.

However, the restoration of US confidence has come at a cost for Pakistan. Islamabad has hardened its stance towards the Afghan Taliban, even cancelling a planned visit by Afghanistan's foreign minister at Washington's advice. At the same time, it has sought to reassure China by presenting closer ties with the US as an opportunity to strengthen Pakistan's geopolitical position in ways that could ultimately benefit Beijing. Still, Afghanistan remains a critical factor in Pakistan's internal security and regional ambitions, particularly regarding connectivity with Central Asia.

The article cautions that Pakistan's policymakers risk repeating past mistakes by focusing on short-term diplomatic gains—such as India's current discomfort—without formulating a durable long-term strategy. The strengthening of CT cooperation with the US may provide immediate benefits, but its sustainability depends on whether Islamabad can balance its relations with major powers while addressing the evolving security challenges in its neighborhood.

Summary of "Alaska optics win for Putin" by Abbas Nasir

The article "*Alaska optics win for Putin*" by Abbas Nasir explores the symbolic and political significance of the recent meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump in Alaska. The carefully choreographed event was presented as a peace-building initiative, but in reality, it offered Putin a major diplomatic and symbolic victory. Since his invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Putin had been a pariah in the West, indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and diplomatically isolated. Yet, Trump's red-carpet welcome in Alaska not only rehabilitated his image but also projected him as a legitimate partner for negotiations on Ukraine. The optics of the event—from their coordinated arrivals, warm handshake, and Trump applauding Putin, to Putin's decision to ride in Trump's limousine—showcased the Russian leader's confidence and political gain.

The US military presence, including F-35s and a B2 bomber flypast, was described by commentators as force projection, but Putin appeared unfazed, even amused, interpreting it as a symbolic salute. For Putin, this welcome was a striking reversal of his diplomatic isolation. During the joint media appearance, both leaders refrained from answering questions, with Putin reading a statement praising Trump and hinting at the possibility of peace if "root causes" were addressed, while Trump described the meeting as "productive" though without final agreement. Importantly, Trump announced plans to consult Ukraine's

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President Volodymyr Zelensky, European leaders, and NATO, with Zelensky soon scheduled to visit Washington.

The peace negotiations are likely to hinge on critical compromises. Putin has long demanded recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea and remains reluctant to relinquish eastern Ukrainian territory already under Russian control. Meanwhile, Ukraine and its European allies continue to hold a "no land for peace" stance. A potential deal under discussion includes security guarantees for Ukraine, but with conditions such as halting NATO's eastward expansion and avoiding Western troop deployment—concerns central to Russia since the Soviet Union's collapse.

While Trump has styled himself as a peacemaker—boasting of deserving a Nobel Peace Prize—the article highlights contradictions in his foreign policy, particularly his support for Israel's actions in Gaza. Abbas Nasir suggests that any credibility Trump might gain from Ukraine peace efforts will remain incomplete unless he also applies principled diplomacy to end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. For now, the Alaska summit allowed Putin to buy time against harsher US sanctions, secure direct engagement with the US president, and signal flexibility on potential compromises. The meeting underscored how Western politics often prioritises optics and strategic calculations over consistent principles, giving Putin an undeniable diplomatic boost.

Summary of "Don't stop press" by Muna Khan

The article "*Don't stop press*" by Muna Khan reflects on the challenges of true solidarity in journalism, contrasting it with superficial social media activism. The writer recalls the strong unity shown by journalists during Gen Musharraf's ban on Geo in 2007, when colleagues from different media houses stood together to defend press freedom. However, by the time Geo was shut down again a decade later, solidarity had weakened, largely due to internal divisions within media organisations, journalists being co-opted by regimes, and increasing repression. Today, the press landscape is fragmented, with journalists often seen as partisan spokespersons rather than independent professionals, a trend that has contributed to declining public trust in media globally. The Reuters Institute's 2025 Digital News Report confirms this erosion of credibility, showing that more people rely on social media and influencers for information, while many struggle to distinguish truth from falsehood online.

Khan argues that despite disinformation and partisanship within journalism, removing such voices from the public sphere undermines freedom of speech. Journalists must defend the principle of press freedom—even for those they disagree with—because suppression of one outlet can eventually extend to all. This principle is particularly urgent in the context of

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Gaza, where Israel has killed Al Jazeera reporter Anas al-Sharif along with his entire reporting team. Their deaths are part of the 238 journalists killed since the war began, yet global condemnation has been muted, with Israel dismissing Anas as being linked to Hamas. Such justifications, the writer insists, are absurd and dangerous. Killing journalists—whatever their political stance—cannot be legitimised, and silence from the international community amounts to complicity.

The article highlights how journalists in different contexts face grave challenges: in Pakistan, low pay and job insecurity; in India, compromised independence during wartime; and in Gaza, the deadly risk of reporting atrocities as they unfold. Israel's systematic targeting of Palestinian journalists, the writer warns, paves the way for unchecked occupation and war crimes, as killing reporters eliminates witnesses. Western journalists may be allowed entry, but their coverage has already shown biases that downplay atrocities. The moral failure of global leaders and press organisations to strongly condemn these killings represents a collapse in the responsibility to protect those who risk their lives to reveal truths in war.

Khan concludes that journalism can only survive if solidarity is restored—across political divides, borders, and ideologies. Journalists must defend each other universally, because if silence prevails in the face of these killings, there will soon be no one left to speak for press freedom.

Summary of “Nature’s payoff” by Aisha Khan

The article “*Nature’s payoff*” by Aisha Khan highlights the worsening link between deforestation and the intensifying scale of climate-related disasters in Pakistan. While climate change is often cited as the main driver of floods, landslides, and glacial lake outburst floods, the writer stresses that internal factors—especially reckless deforestation—are amplifying the crisis. Pakistan’s forest cover has been shrinking at an alarming pace, with KP losing 1.5pc annually, equivalent to 11,000 hectares each year between 2000 and 2023. Areas such as Chitral, Kalam, and upper Hazara have suffered the most, leaving vast tracts of bare land exposed to extreme heating. Without tree canopy to regulate surface temperatures, soil heats up rapidly, creating stronger local low-pressure systems that pull in monsoon winds more forcefully. This, combined with warmer sea surface temperatures, fuels violent cloudbursts, flash floods, and other hydrometeorological disasters that devastate lives, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

The article warns that recent illegal logging in Chitral’s Arandu Gol, Makhniyal Guzara Forest in Hazara, and Ayubia National Park represents ominous developments. Deforestation is not simply an environmental concern but a direct threat to human survival,

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as it increases vulnerability to natural calamities while displacing communities. Past disasters such as the 1992 and 2010 floods in Kalam, and recent cloudbursts in Babusar, GB, and Swat, illustrate the high human and economic costs of neglect. Protecting forests now, the writer argues, is the most effective way to mitigate risks and prevent repeating history.

Moreover, Pakistan's deforestation undermines its commitments under the Paris Agreement, jeopardising emission reduction goals and worsening its poor performance in meeting Sustainable Development Goals. Instead of blaming external factors, the state must acknowledge its internal failures: weak enforcement of forest regulations, lack of accountability, and prioritisation of commercial exploitation over ecological preservation. Continuing down this path not only weakens climate resilience but also compounds poverty, displacement, and infrastructure losses.

Khan concludes that Pakistan's resilience lies in ecological restoration and protection of existing forests. Sustainable development requires safeguarding natural ecosystems, reducing the burden of recurring disasters, and protecting communities from worsening vulnerabilities. Unless urgent action is taken, unchecked deforestation will continue to intensify climate catastrophes, leaving the country exposed to escalating risks that are entirely preventable.



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